

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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WILLING TO DIE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE ROSE AND THE KEY."

CHAPTER II. OUR CURIOSITY IS PIQUED.

AND so that odd vision was gone; and Laura Grey turned to us eagerly for information.

We could not give her much. We were ourselves so familiar with the fact of Mr. Carmel's existence, that it never occurred to us that his appearance could be a surprise to any one.

Mr. Carmel had come about eight months before to reside in the small old house in which the land-steward had once been harboured, and which, built in continuation of the side of the house, forms a sort of retreating wing to it, with a hall-door to itself, but under the same roof.

This Mr. Carmel was, undoubtedly, a Roman Catholic, and an ecclesiastic; of what order I know not. Possibly he was a Jesuit. I never was very learned or very curious upon such points; but some one, I forget who, told me that he positively was a member of the Society of Jesus.

My poor mother was very High Church, and on very friendly terms with Catholic personages of note. Mr. Carmel had been very ill, and was still in delicate health, and a quiet nook in the country in the neighbourhood of the sea had been ordered for him. The vacant house I have described she begged for his use from my father, who did not at all like the idea of lending it, as I could gather from the partly jocular and partly serious discussions which he maintained upon the point, every now and then, at the breakfast-table, when I was last in town.

I remember hearing my father say at last: "You know, my dear Mabel, I'm always

ready to do anything you like. I'll be a Catholic myself if it gives you the least pleasure, only be sure, first, about this thing, that you really do like it. I shouldn't care if the man were hanged—he very likely deserves it—but I'll give him my house if it makes you happy. You must remember, though, the Cardyllion people won't like it, and you'll be talked about, and I dare say he'll make nuns of Ethel and Helen. He won't get a great deal by that, I'm afraid. And I don't see why those pious people—Jesuits, and that sort of persons, who don't know what to do with their money—should not take a house for him if he wants it, or what business they have quartering their friars and rubbish upon poor Protestants like you and me."

The end of it was that about two months later this Mr. Carmel arrived, duly accredited by my father, who told me when he paid us one of his visits of a day, soon after, that he was under promise not to talk to us about religion, and that if he did I was to write to tell him immediately.

When I had told my story to Laura Grey, she was thoughtful for a little time.

"Are his visits only once a week?" she asked.

"Yes," said I.

"And does he stay as short a time always?" she continued.

We both agreed that he usually stayed a little longer.

"And has he never talked on the subject of religion?"

"No, never. He has talked about shells, or flowers, or anything he found us employed about, and always told us something curious or interesting. I had heard papa say that he was engaged upon a work from which great things were expected, and boxes of books were perpetually coming

and going between him and his correspondents."

She was not quite satisfied, and in a few days there arrived from London two little books on the great controversy between Luther and the Pope; and out of these, to the best of her poor ability, she drilled us, by way of a prophylactic against Mr. Carmel's possible machinations.

It did not appear, however, to be Mr. Carmel's mission to flutter the little nest of heresy so near him. When he paid his next visit it so happened that one of these duodecimo disputants lay upon the table. Without thinking, as he talked, he raised it, and read the title on the cover, and smiled gently. Miss Grey blushed. She had not intended disclosing her suspicions.

"In two different regiments, Miss Grey," he said, "but both under the same king;" and he laid the book quietly upon the table again, and talked on of something quite different.

Laura Grey, in a short time, became less suspicious of Mr. Carmel, and rather enjoyed his little visits, and looked forward pleasantly to them.

Could you imagine a quieter or more primitive life than ours: or, on earth, a much happier one?

Malory owns an old-fashioned square pew in the aisle of the pretty church of Cardyllion. In this spacious pew we three sat every Sunday; and on one of these occasions, a few weeks after Miss Grey's arrival, from my corner I thought I saw a stranger in the Verney seat, which is at the opposite side of the aisle, and had not had an occupant for several months. There was certainly a man in it; but the stove that stood nearly between us would not allow me to see more than his elbow and the corner of an open book, from which I suppose he was reading.

I was not particularly curious about this person. I knew that the Verneys, who were distant cousins of ours, were abroad, and the visitor was not likely to be very interesting.

A long indistinct sermon interposed, and I did not recollect to look at the Verney pew until the congregation were trooping decorously out, and we had got some way down the aisle.

The pew was empty by that time.

"Some one in the Verneys' pew," I remarked to our governess, so soon as we were quite out of the shadow of the porch.

"Which is the Verneys' pew?" she asked.

I described it.

"Yes; there was. I have got a headache, dear. Suppose we go home by the Mill-road?"

We agreed.

It is a very pretty, and in places rather a steep road, very narrow, and ascending with a high and wooded bank at its right, and a precipitous and thickly planted glen to its left. The opposite side is thickly wooded also, and a stream far below splashes and tinkles among the rocks under the darkening foliage.

As we walked up this shadowy road, I saw an old gentleman walking down it, toward us. He was descending at a brisk pace, and wore a chocolate-coloured great-coat, made with a cape, and fitting his slight figure closely. He wore a hat with a rather wide brim, turned up at the sides. His face was very brown. He had a thin high nose, with very thin nostrils, rather prominent eyes, and carried his head high. Altogether he struck me as a particularly gentleman-like and ill-tempered looking old man, and his features wore a character of hauteur that was perfectly insolent.

He was pretty near us by the time I turned to warn our governess, who was beside me, to make way for him to pass. I did not speak; for I was a little startled to see that she was very much flushed, and almost instantly turned deadly pale.

We came nearly to a stand-still, and the old gentleman was up to us in a few seconds. As he approached, his prominent eyes were fixed on Laura Grey. He stopped, with the same haughty stare, and, raising his hat, said in a cold, rather high key, "Miss Grey, I think? Miss Laura Grey? You will not object, I dare say, to allow me a very few words?"

The young lady bowed very slightly, and said, in a low tone, "Certainly not."

I saw that she looked pained, and even faint. This old gentleman's manner, and the stern stare of his prominent eyes, embarrassed even me, who did not directly encounter them.

"Perhaps we had better go on, Helen and I, to the seat; we can wait for you there?" I said softly to her.

"Yes, dear, I think it will be as well," she answered gently.

We walked on slowly. The bench was not a hundred steps up the steep. It stands at the side of the road, with its back against the bank. From this seat I could see very well what passed, though, of course, quite out of hearing.

The old gentleman had a black cane in his fingers, which he poked about on the gravel. You would have said from his countenance that at every little stab he punched an enemy's eye out.

First, the gentleman made a little speech, with his head very high, and an air of determination and severity. The young lady seemed to answer, briefly and quietly. Then ensued a colloquy of a minute or more, during which the old gentleman's head nodded often with emphasis, and his gestures became much more decided. The young lady seemed to say little, and very quietly: her eyes were lowered to the ground as she spoke.

She said something, I suppose, which he chose to resent, for he smiled sarcastically, and raised his hat; then, suddenly resuming his gravity, he seemed to speak with a sharp and hectoring air, as if he were laying down the law upon some point once for all.

Laura Grey looked up sharply, with a brilliant colour, and with her head high, replied rapidly for a minute or more, and turning away, without waiting for his answer, walked slowly, with her head still high, towards us.

The gentleman stood looking after her with his sarcastic smile, but that was gone in a moment, and he continued looking, with an angry face, and muttering to himself, until suddenly he turned away, and walked off at a quick pace down the path towards Cardyllion.

A little uneasily, Helen and I stood up to meet our governess. She was still flushed, and breathing quickly, as people do from recent agitation.

"No bad news? Nothing unpleasant?" I asked, looking very eagerly into her face.

"No; no bad news, dear."

I took her hand. I felt that she was trembling a little, and she had become again more than usually pale. We walked homeward in silence.

Laura Grey seemed in deep and agitated thought. We did not, of course, disturb her. An unpleasant excitement like that always disposes one to silence. Not a word, I think, was uttered all the way to the steps of Malory. Laura Grey entered the hall, still silent, and when she came down to us, after an hour or two passed in her room, it was plain she had been crying.

CHAPTER III. THE THIEF IN THE NIGHT.

OF what happened next I have a strangely imperfect recollection. I cannot tell you the intervals, or even the

order, in which some of the events occurred. It is not that the mist of time obscures it; what I do recollect is dreadfully vivid; but there are spaces of the picture gone. I see faces of angels, and faces that make my heart sink; fragments of scenes. It is like something reflected in the pieces of a smashed looking-glass.

I have told you very little of Helen, my sister, my one darling on earth. There are things which people, after an interval of half a life, have continually present to their minds, but cannot speak of. The idea of opening them to strangers is insupportable. A sense of profanation shuts the door, and we "wake" our dead alone. I could not have told you what I am going to write. I did not intend inscribing here more than the short, bleak result. But I write it as if to myself, and I will get through it.

To you it may seem that I make too much of this, which is, as Hamlet says, "common." But you have not known what it is to be for all your early life shut out from all but one beloved companion, and never after to have found another.

Helen had a cough, and Laura Grey had written to mamma, who was then in Warwickshire, about it. She was referred to the Cardyllion doctor. He came; he was a skilful man. There were the hushed, dreadful moments, while he listened, through his stethoscope, thoughtfully, to the "still, small voice" of fate, to us inaudible, pronouncing on the dread issues of life or death.

"No sounder lungs in England," said Doctor Mervyn, looking up with a congratulatory smile.

He told her, only, that she must not go in the way of cold, and by-and-bye sent her two bottles from his surgery; and so we were all happy once more.

But doctor's advices, like the warnings of fate, are seldom obeyed; least of all by the young. Nelly's little pet sparrow was ailing, or we fancied it was. She and I were up every hour during the night to see after it. Next evening Nelly had a slight pain in her chest. It became worse, and by twelve o'clock was so intense that Laura Grey, in alarm, sent to Cardyllion for the doctor. Thomas Jones came back without him, after a delay of an hour. He had been called away to make a visit somewhere, but the moment he came back he would come to Malory.

It came to be three o'clock; he had not appeared; darling Nelly was in actual torture. Again Doctor Mervyn was sent for:

and again, after a delay, the messenger returned with the same dismaying answer. The governess and Rebecca Torkill exhausted in vain their little list of remedies. I was growing terrified. Intuitively I perceived the danger. The doctor was my last earthly hope. Death, I saw, was drawing nearer and nearer every moment, and the doctor might be ten miles away. Think what it was to stand, helpless, by her. Can I ever forget her poor little face, flushed scarlet, the gasping and catching at breath, hands, throat, every sinew quivering in the mortal struggle!

At last a knock and a ring at the hall-door. I rushed to the window; the first chill grey of winter's dawn hung sickly over the landscape. No one was on the steps, or on the grey gravel of the court. But, yes—I do hear voices and steps upon the stair approaching. Oh! Heaven be thanked, the doctor is come at last!

I ran out upon the lobby, just as I was, in my dressing-gown, with my hair about my shoulders, and slippers on my bare feet. A candlestick, with the candle burnt low, was standing on the broad head of the clumsy old bannister, and Mr. Carmel, in a black riding-coat, with his hat in his hand, and that kind of riding-boots that used to be called clerical, on, was talking in a low earnest tone to our governess.

The faint grey from the low lobby window was lost at this point, and the delicate features of the pale ecclesiastic, and Miss Grey's pretty and anxious face, were lighted, like a fine portrait of Schalken's, by the candle only.

Throughout this time of agony and tumult, the memory of my retina remains unimpaired, and every picture retains its hold upon my brain.

And, oh! had the doctor come?

Yes. Mr. Carmel had ridden all the way, fourteen miles, to Llwynan, and brought the doctor back with him. He might not have been here for hours otherwise. He was now down-stairs making preparations, and would be in the room in a few minutes.

I looked at that fine, melancholy, energetic face as if he had saved me. I could not thank him. I turned and entered our room again, and told Nelly to be of good courage, that the doctor was come. "And, oh! please God, he'll do you good, my own darling, darling—precious darling!"

In a minute more the doctor was in the room. My eyes were fixed upon his face as he talked to his poor little patient; he did

not look at all as he had done on his former visit. I see him before me as I write; his bald head shining in the candle-light, his dissatisfied and gloomy face, and his shrewd light-blue eyes, reading her looks askance, as his fingers rested on her pulse.

I remember, as if the sick-room changed into it, finding myself in the small room opposite, with no one there but the doctor and Miss Grey, we three, in the cold morning light, and his saying, "Well, all this comes of violating directions. There is very intense inflammation, and her chest is in a most critical state."

Then Miss Grey said, after a moment's hush, the awful words, "Is there any danger?" and he answered shortly, "I wish I could say there wasn't." I felt my ears sing as if a pistol had been fired. No one spoke for another minute or more.

The doctor stayed, I think, for a long time, and he must have returned after, for he is mixed up in almost every scene I can remember during that jumbled day of terror.

There was, I know, but one day, and part of a night. But it seems to me as if whole nights intervened, and suns set and rose, and days uncounted and undistinguished passed, in that miserable period.

The pain subsided, but worse followed; a dreadful cough, that never ceased—a long, agonised struggle against a slow drowning of the lungs. The doctor gave her up. They wanted me to leave the room, but I could not.

The hour came at last, and she was gone. The wild cry—the terrible farewell—nothing can move inexorable death. All was still.

As the ship lies serene in the caverns of the cold sea, and feels no more the fury of the wind, the strain of cable, and the crash of wave, this forlorn wreck lay quiet now. Oh! little Nelly! I could not believe it.

She lay in her night-dress under the white coverlet. Was this whole scene an awful vision, and was my heart breaking in vain? Oh, poor simple little Nelly, to think that you should have changed into anything so sublime and terrible!

I stood dumb by the bedside, staring at the white face that was never to move again. Such a look I had never seen before. The white glory of an angel was upon it.

Rebecca Torkill spoke to me, I think. I remember her kind, sorrowful old face near me, but I did not hear what she said. I

was in a stupor, or a trance. I had not shed a tear. I had not said a word. For a time I was all but mad. In the light of that beautiful transfiguration my heart was bursting with the wildest rebellion against the law of death that had murdered my innocent sister before my eyes; against the fate of which humanity is the sport; against the awful Power who made us! What spirit knows, till the hour of temptation, the height or depth of its own impiety?

Oh, gentle, patient little Nelly! The only good thing I can see in myself in those days, is my tender love of you, and my deep inward certainty of my immeasurable inferiority. Gentle, humble little Nelly, who thought me so excelling in cleverness, in wisdom, and countless other perfections, how humble in my secret soul I felt myself beside you, although I was too proud to say so! In your presence my fierce earthy nature stood revealed, and wherever I looked my shadow was cast along the ground by the pure light that shone from you.

I don't know what time passed without a word falling from my lips. I suppose people had other things to mind, and I was left to myself. But Laura Grey stole her hand into mine, she kissed me, and I felt her tears on my cheek.

"Ethel, darling, come with me," she said, crying, very gently. "You can come back again. You'll come with me, won't you? Our darling is happier, Ethel, than ever she could have been on earth, and she will never know change or sorrow again."

I began to sob distractedly. I do really believe I was half out of my mind. I began to talk to her volubly, vehemently, crying passionately all the time. I do not remember now a word I uttered; I know its purport only from the pain and even horror I remember in Laura Grey's pale face. It has taken a long and terrible discipline to expel that evil spirit. I know what I was in those days. My pilgrimage since then has been by steep and solitary paths, in great dangers, in darkness, in fear; I have eaten the bread of affliction, and my drink has been of the waters of bitterness; I am tired and footsore, yet, though through a glass darkly, I think I can now see why it all was, and I thank God with a contrite heart for the terrors and the mercies he has shown me. I begin to discover through the mist who was the one friend who never forsook me through all those stupen-

dous wanderings, and I long for the time when I shall close my tired eyes, all being over, and lie at the feet of my Saviour.

CHRONICLES OF LONDON STREETS.

COVENT GARDEN (CENTRAL).

FOR ages a monastic garden and quiet semi-rural cemetery for the monks of Westminster; then a deserted plot and noisy playground for London urchins outside the gardens of Bedford House; at last, four years before the Restoration, a regular market-place built by Inigo Jones, with piazzas along the north and east sides. Such briefly are the chief transformation scenes which Harlequin Time has with his magic wand struck out of this central parade-ground of theatrical London—the "herbivorous parish," as Sydney Smith used to call it, of Covent Garden.

The modern square of Covent Garden was first formed in 1631, from the designs of Inigo Jones, who took the notion of the piazza from a square at Leghorn. In the centre, eight years after the Restoration, there was erected a column, surmounted by a dial, and the whole area was laid with gravel. Along the south side ran the wall of the garden of Bedford House, with a row of trees, under which, three days in the week, the first market-stalls stood. The square remained fashionable till Hanover, Grosvenor, and Cavendish-squares arose, and the quality flitted westward. Among other celebrities, Pope's Lady Mary Wortley Montague lived here in 1730, and is then mentioned as driving to Hyde Park, to take the air after a recent indisposition.

To perambulate the square on some reasonable system, let us commence with Evans's, at the north-west corner. This stately old brick mansion, since rebuilt or much altered, was occupied in succession by three eminent persons, all of whom were known to Lord Clarendon, and are drawn by him in his great History of the Civil War in grave full length. First of all through the new doorway entered Sir Harry Vane, the younger, from whom Cromwell, with that grim humour of his own, prayed so loudly to be delivered. Clarendon describes Vane as an ill-favoured man of great natural parts, and of very profound dissimulation, and of a quick conception. In Geneva first, and then in New England, he ripened his bitter gall against the Church, and with the aid of

Pym hastened the ruin of that dark, resolute, and dangerous adviser of King Charles, Wentworth, Lord Strafford. He married a lady of good family, and was for a time treasurer in the navy, till the Parliament assumed royal power, and led him to that current in which he eventually ran foul of that greatest bark of all that navigated those troubled seas, Cromwell himself. He remained refractory, and at the Restoration was beheaded on Tower-hill.

After Vane, there reigned in this house a still more extraordinary man—the great patron and friend of Ben Jonson, Sir Kenelm Digby. This great personage was the son of Sir Everard Digby, a Buckinghamshire Catholic baronet, who perished in his youth for his share in the Gunpowder Conspiracy. Kenelm entered the service of Prince Charles during that romantic visit to Spain, and on his return to England was knighted by the delighted King James, who nearly poked out one of his eyes during the august ceremony. He married one of the greatest beauties of the day, Venetia Stanley, an offshoot of the Derby family, and by no means of the severest virtue. Digby, in his *Private Memoirs*, says that her hair was like a stream of sunbeams converted into solid substance, and Aubrey, talking with his usual garrulous warmth, describes her face as being short and oval, with dark brown eyebrows, about which much sweetness, as also in the opening of her eyelids. She must have been beautiful indeed, and deserves the following lines of Ben Jonson's, which he wrote after her sudden death:

Draw first a cloud, all save her neck,
And out of that make day to break;
Till like her face it do appear
And men may think all light rose there.
Then let the beams of that disperse
The cloud and show the universe;
But at such distance as the eye
May rather yet adore than spy.

Pious Feltham and amiable Babington also wrote elegies upon her, and Randolph composed lines on the same occasion.

Bring all the spices that Arabia yields.
Distil the choicest flowers that paint the fields,
And when in one their best perfections meet,
Embaln her corse that she may make them sweet.

On Sir Kenelm, also, the *Mirandola* of his age, who is said to have known twelve languages, and to have discovered the art of making gold, Ben Jonson lavished much praise. In verses to Lady Venetia the poet says:

He doth excel
In honour, courtesy, and all the parts
Court can call hers, or man could call his arts.

He's prudent, valiant, just and temperate;
In him all virtue is beheld in state,
And he is built like some imperial room
For that to dwell in, and be still at home.
His breast is a brave palace, a broad street,
Where all heroic ample thoughts do meet;
Where nature such a large survey hath ta'en,
As other souls to his dwelt in a lane;
Witness his action done at Scanderoon,
Upon his birthday, the eleventh of June;
When the Apostle Barnaby the bright
Unto our year doth give the longest light.

These verses allude to one of Sir Kenelm's great exploits—the defeat of some Venetians at Scanderoon, at a time when Venice was still wealthy and still powerful at sea. This strange man was also the introducer into England of that mysterious Greek medicine, the sympathetic powder, which was not applied to the wound, but to the weapon that had inflicted it. He also wrote poetical criticisms, a book on cooking, a book on philosophy, a book on botany, translated something of Albertus Magnus, proposed to edit Roger Bacon, became a friend of Descartes, and dabbled in alchemy. His house in Covent Garden became a sort of academy for the savans of the day, and he had a laboratory in his garden (now the singing-room at Evans's). He died five years after the Restoration, and was buried in Christ Church, Newgate-street. Although Digby fought for King Charles, he was very generally supposed to have been a go-between used by Cromwell to make advances to the Catholic party. He used to boast that Mary de Medicis fell in love with him when he was a young gallant at Paris. His portrait by Vandyke, who also painted his dead wife, shows a handsome, portly man, full of vanity and self-confidence. There is no doubt, however, that as an encourager of scientific experiments he very materially helped forward that great movement that soon led to the formation of the Royal Society.

The next occupier was Denzil Holles, a son of the first Earl of Clare. He was one of the party who roused the Parliament against the Duke of Buckingham, that first evil adviser of King Charles, and was imprisoned on that account, a disagreeable fact which he by no means forgot. He carried up the impeachment of Archbishop Laud, was one of the members who held the Speaker down in his chair during a dangerous debate against the king's overstrained prerogative, and was one of the five obnoxious members, the attempted seizure of whom led to the outbreak of the Civil War. Eventually, his party went too far for him, and he helped forward the

Restoration, Charles the Second rewarding him with the title of Lord Holles. He was our ambassador at Breda, and died in 1680.

The next comer was, like Sir Kenelm Digby, a laurel-crowned admiral—Russell, afterwards Earl of Orford. It was this treacherous trimmer between William and James, who, brave as he was false, shattered in 1692 the French fleet of Louis the Fourteenth, near La Hogue, a tremendous victory, which finally crushed the hopes of the English Jacobites, spread dismay at St. Germain, and raised England again to the supreme monarchy of the seas. In this great conflict sixteen French men-of-war (eight of them three-deckers), were sunk or burned. Rooke and Sir Cloudesley Shovel fought by the side of Russell. After all, Macaulay, who is generally black or white, and seldom uses neutral tints, is too severe on Russell, who lived in an age when all the world was expecting the inevitable restoration of the Stuarts, and trimmed accordingly. Once steering straight for the centre of the French line his patriotism never wavered. Before recent alterations the façade of Evans's was thought to resemble the forecastle of a ship, the old staircase up which Russell has often walked thinking of his last secret letter to James, once formed part of the *Britannia* (one hundred guns), the vessel the admiral commanded at La Hogue. It is carved with anchors, cables, coronets, and the initial letters of Lord Orford's name.

After Admiral Russell came Lord Archer, a nobleman of George the Second's creating, who died in 1768, whose title became extinct on the death of his son. To Lord Archer succeeded James West, a great book and print collector, who died in 1772.

Then passed away the greatness of the house; it sank into the plebeian rank, for in 1774, David Low, a hairdresser of Tavistock-street, opened it as a family hotel, the first of that description in London, and the enterprising barber distributed medals of the house, which procured him many lodgers. The place evidently took root and flourished, for in 1794 the proprietor, a Mr. Hudson, advertised the house as "with stabling for one hundred noblemen's horses."

Evans, a low comedian of Covent Garden Theatre, removed here from the Cyder Cellar in Maiden-lane, and converted the cellar, or large dining-room below stairs, into a singing-room where refreshments could be obtained. The songs were of rather a ribald and coarse kind, but the place

was snug after the theatre, and soon grew popular. It was sketched by Thackeray as the Cave of Harmony, and many modern essayists have described the same old haunt. In 1844, Evans's fell into the hands of Mr. John (better known as "Paddy") Green, an Irish actor and singer, who raised the style of the entertainments, and introduced a band of chorister boys, with fresh young voices and pleasant young faces.

St. Paul's Church, that dull grave Doric building in the centre of the west side, was built by Inigo two years after the square was laid out. Onslow, the Speaker, told Horace Walpole an anecdote about this church. When the Earl of Bedford sent for Inigo, he told him he wanted a chapel for the parishioners of Covent Garden, but added he would not go to any considerable expense. "In short," said he, "I would not have it much better than a barn." "Well, then," replied Jones, "you shall have the handsomest barn in England." The expense of building was four thousand five hundred pounds, so that the barn for the inhabitants that had not yet arrived was after all not so very cheap.

The old church was burned down in 1795, owing to the carelessness of labourers repairing the lead of the cupola, and only the bare walls were left. The church a few years before had cost ten thousand pounds repairing. Inigo's barn was of brick with stone columns to the portico, and had a red tiled roof. On the apex of the pediment was a stone cross, that gave great offence to the Puritans. The clock (1641) was the first long pendulum clock in Europe, says Peter Cunningham, "which its maker's name was Harris."

Around St. Paul's lie buried many clever and illustrious persons: Butler, the author of *Hudibras*; Sir Peter Lely; Estcourt the actor, eulogised as such a good fellow by Steele; Kynaston, the last and best male actor of female parts; Wycherley, the dramatist, Pope's early adviser; Grinling Gibbons, the great carver; Mrs. Centlivre, the dramatist; Wilks, the actor, the best of stage gallants; Davies, the bookseller, who introduced Boswell to Johnson; Sir Robert Strange, the great Jacobite engraver, who warred with the Academy for their contemptuous neglect of engravers; Girtin, that fine water-colour painter, Turner's early companion; Macklin, the great actor of Shylock, who lived to one hundred and seven (?), and John Wolcot, Peter Pindar, the stinging satirist of the foibles of George the Third.

In front of this church the Westminster election hustings used to be raised when Fox or Burdett were candidates for "the sweet voices," and here for seven days together the noisy partisans roared like the mob of Ephesus. The rubbish of the garden was always very useful for political purposes, for your tough cabbage-stalk or knotty turnip is even more convincing than your rotten egg or your decomposing kitten. There is a glimpse of the old church in Hogarth's print of Morning (1737), where the sour old maid is going to early prayers before the last night's revellers have ended their last carouse. At Tom King's Coffee House, a mere shed on the south side of the church portico, drunken rakes are fighting with swords and fire shovels, while a drunken scape-grace stops to kiss and fondle a pretty market girl fresh from Fulham. Near this was the Queen's Head, afterwards the Finish, a garden tavern kept open all night for the waggoners and fruit-cart men. It was only cleared away, says Mr. Timbs, in 1829.

The house, now the Tavistock, in the north-east piazza, boasts almost as illustrious memories as Evans's, for there in succession four eminent painters dwelt, Sir Peter Lely, Sir Godfrey Kneller, and Sir James Thornhill; and the Tavistock breakfast-room was Richard Wilson's chambers when he was painting grand landscapes, which no one would buy.

Lely was a Westphalian; his real name Vanderhaas; but his father, settling in Holland, changed his name to Lely, from a pot of lilies being the sign of his house. It was Lely who, when painting Cromwell, was told by the honest Protector to put in every wart and pimple in his face, or he would not pay him a doit. Black-haired, saturnine Charles the Second and his hatchet-faced brother James sat often to him, and his slight graceful kind of painting suited that flimsy and meretricious age to a T. All the beautiful but frail women of King Charles's time came to him for their portraits, which are the best illustrations that exist of De Grammont's amusing but dissolute Memoirs. Pretty, good-natured, naughty Nell Gwynne, the black-browed, unhappy Portuguese queen, and Belle Stuart, the Britannia of our half-pennies, the outrageous Duchess of Portsmouth, the shameless Mazarine, that beautiful termagant, the Duchess of Cleveland, still live for us on his canvas. Indeed, half the people mentioned by Pepys and

Evelyn must have come to Covent Garden to sit beside Lely's easel. Friends of Newton and of Buckingham, philosophers and rakes, wits and playwrights, statesmen and buffoons, all showered their guineas on Lely, and secured his flattering brush. The prosperous court painter died of apoplexy in 1680, while painting the portrait of the Duchess of Somerset.

Kneller, a native of Lubeck and a pupil of Rembrandt, shared Lely's later popularity, and Charles allowed him to paint a portrait of him at the same time that he was sitting to Lely. He became as great a man at the court of William and Queen Anne as his predecessor had been at that less respectable one of Charles. The beauties of Hampton Court testify to the royal patronage, and show a chaster and more refined loveliness than that which Lely perpetuated. The admirable mezzotint workers of those days did much to found the fame of both men, and through that eminently pictorial art his best works were given to the eager public by thousands. His pale neutral colour and light sketchy manner acquired a certain dignity in pure black and white. The fluttering days of ribbon-covered rakes had passed away, and broadcloth was coming in. No one could throw such a grace as Kneller over the flowing lace cravat, or let it fall in graver lines over the polished corselet; no one could better paint those cascades of hair with which men in Queen Anne's time covered their pericraniums. Kneller could paint a gentleman well; not the ideal cavalier like Vandyke, or the astute senator like Titian, but still a gentleman and man of sense. Indeed, he was even more fortunate than Lely in his sitters, for he painted in his time ten monarchs, including Louis the Fourteenth, and all the wits of the Kit-Kat Club, among whom were Steele, Addison, and Congreve. He mixed, too, in more intellectual society than Lely, was a friend of Pope and Gay, and knew everybody worth knowing in his time. He was a good-natured, lively, extremely vain man, and it was a well-known joke against him as a justice of peace that he dismissed a soldier who had stolen a leg of mutton, and punished the butcher who had left the meat in a place of temptation. He used to declare he should have been a great general, because he delighted in the smell of fireworks; and once had a dream, in which he saw Saint Peter beckoning him to a special seat of honour near Saint Luke in Paradise. Pope often made fun of him, but on one

occasion Sir Godfrey was too much for the little crooked poet.

"Don't you really think, Sir Godfrey," said Pope one day, seriously, after fooling him to the top of his bent, "that if your advice had been asked at the creation some things would have been shaped far better than they are?"

"Fore gad," said Sir Godfrey, pressing Pope's deformed shoulder as he spoke, "I think they would," which was a very palpable hit, and no doubt made the little archer put by his satirical arrows for the rest of the day.

Lely's chef-d'œuvre was certainly his Hampton Court portrait of the Princess Mary as Diana, one of the most innocent, girlish, joyous faces and figures that exists on canvas. Kneller considered his chef-d'œuvre to be the Converted Chinese, now at Windsor; but one certainly of his most historically interesting pictures is that of James the Second, now in the possession of Mr. S. Pepys Cockerell. The king was sitting for it when the news arrived of the landing of the Prince of Orange, and the courtly painter proposed to pack up and retire.

"No," said the king, "I have promised Mr. Pepys my picture, and I will finish the sitting."

It is worth while remembering that a Lely may be easily distinguished from a Kneller by the fact that in Lely the wigs fall down on the shoulders, but in Kneller's portraits the curls are thrown carelessly behind the back. Kneller, who was fond of money and careless of fame, used to charge sixty pounds for a full length. Prices have advanced since then. Sir Thomas Lawrence charged six hundred pounds for a whole length, and seven hundred pounds for an extra whole length, half the price to be paid down at the first sitting.

The third possessor of the Tavistock was a far inferior painter to either Lely or Kneller. He aimed higher, but then unfortunately he did not hit the mark. Sir James Thornhill (Hogarth's father-in-law) was one of those artists who, from a certain academic manner, great self-confidence, and a certain amount of taste and learning, obtained a temporary but short-lived fame. With no real sound knowledge, but considerable fluency of composition, this big-wig of his inartistic time obtained all the more ambitious work of the day. He ornamented the refectory and saloon of Greenwich Hospital, he copied

Raphael's Cartoons, and executed those flimsy grisailles (the History of Saint Paul) in the dome of Saint Paul's, which, we may hope, will soon be effaced. One would like to think (and it is not punishable to do so) that it was at the Tavistock that Hogarth courted pretty Miss Thornhill, and behind an easel or a painting screen received the plighting kiss.

But the scent of flowers draws us like bees to the central avenue. There we know that we shall find the fruits and blossoms of half the regions of the earth. The market, we have already mentioned, seems to have continued under the shade of the Bedford Garden trees till 1704, when the building of the Tavistock-road forced the stall-keepers further into the central area, where the stalls gradually grew into houses. Good-natured Steele, in the Tatler (Number four hundred and fifty-four, 1712), describes, in his pleasant airy way, coming by boat from Richmond side by side with a fleet of gardeners' barges. He describes the ruddy maidens of Covent Garden as having the air of persons who sometimes converse with morning rakes. "I landed," he says, "with ten sail of apricot boats at Strand Bridge, after having put in at Nine Elms, and taken in melons consigned by Mr. Cuff, of that place, to Sarah Sewell and Company, at their stall in Covent Garden." The old market is described as a strange assemblage of shed and pent-house, rude stall and crazy tenement, coffee-house and gin-shop, intersected by narrow and ill-lit footways. Nollekens Smith describes a walk in Covent Garden in the last century, when he met Mrs. Nollekens, the wife of the sculptor, with Mrs. Elizabeth Carter, the friend of Doctor Johnson, and the learned translator of Epictetus. They had come to purchase dandelion-roots, and fell into conversation with Twigg, of the Garden, a well-known character, who sold fruit in the market, and knew all the wits of two generations. He had been cook at the Shakespeare Tavern. Twigg recollected Old Joe, the first person who sold flowers in the Garden; his stand was at the north-west corner, within the enclosure for flowers, then known as Primrose-hill, opposite Lowe's Hotel, now Evans's. Mrs. Carter then observed that she remembered that, when Mr. Garrick acted, sedan-chairs were so numerous that they stood all round the piazzas, ran down Southampton-street, and extended more than half way down Maiden-lane. She also recollected shoe-blacks at

every street corner, crying, as people passed, "Black your shoes, your honour." She had also seen the clergyman of St. Paul's visiting the fruit-shops in the Garden in full canonicals, and a very portly woman who used to preside at her fruit stall in a lace dress which was said to have cost more than one hundred guineas. The rosy country girls, and the old Irish crones with the frilled caps and the eternal dudheen between their withered lips, are now things of the past. The lumbering market-cart and the swift railway train have superseded that; but Sir Richard Phillips, that observant bookseller, writing in 1817, gives a pretty picture in his Walk from London to Kew of the gangs of Welsh and Shropshire girls who used to carry baskets of strawberries and raspberries to Covent Garden from Isleworth, Brentford, and Hammersmith. Their basketfuls weighed from forty to fifty pounds, and they would make two turns in the day from Isleworth (thirteen miles), earning fourpence a turn! He praises their beauty, symmetry, and complexion, and says their industry was only equalled by their virtue. The same writer computes the garden-ground within ten miles of the metropolis at fifteen thousand acres, giving employment to sixty thousand labourers.

The present market buildings, designed by Fowler, were erected by the Duke of Bedford in 1830, and the duke is said to derive more than five thousand pounds a year from the rent of the area. The outer colonnades, the terrace-fountains, and conservatories are now worthy of a great city, and of a market where millions are said to be annually paid for fruit and vegetables. From pears at a guinea each to watercresses at a halfpenny a bunch; from bouquets at two guineas (to be thrown at the feet of the great singer who probably paid for them) to the humble bunch of violets at twopence, you can here range through every grade of luxury; and if unable to purchase peas at a guinea a quart, you can refresh yourself with Barcelona nuts at threepence. Here the impecunious gourmand, longing for strawberries at a shilling an ounce, can solace himself with a pennyworth of American apples; and here for nothing at all the street boy, all eyes, can enjoy the Barmecide feast of velvety peaches, rosy cherries, delicious grapes, honied apricots, the owner unconscious of the feast he has afforded. Here, in silent rivalry, the brown pine of Jamaica vies with the scorched banana;

the little close-set family of strawberries with the portly Ribston pippins; the slender cucumber with the rotund pumpkin. Flora and Pomona here are rival exhibitors, and they pour their cornucopias at our feet. You can stand under solid walls of cabbages, and lean against yielding sackfuls of Brazil nuts. Everywhere there is an Oriental lavishness, a boundless Sardanapalian profusion that dazzles the eye and delights the sense. The lady of fashion and the street urchin; the watercress girl and the great opera singer; the busy City man and the lounging man about town, all come here to ogle or to purchase. Comfortable-looking Jews are the high priests of Pomona here, and the whole moving picture is one of gay bustle and playful business, very agreeable to the habitué, and very surprising to the foreigner. Covent Garden is the paradise of actors, the high exchange of flower and fruit lovers—the pleasantest and prettiest shopping place in all London.

The old Hummums (south-east side) was formerly a bagnio or Turkish bath, which the Arabic word Hammam signifies. In Queen Anne's time the charge was five shillings a time, or eight shillings for two friends. It is of this house that Doctor Johnson (credulous wherever the supernatural was concerned) used to tell with entire good faith his celebrated story of the ghost seen by the delirious waiter.

A waiter at the Hummums, in which house Ford died, had been absent for some time and returned, not knowing that Ford was dead. Going down to the cellar, according to the story, he met him; going down again, he met him a second time. When he came up he asked some people of the house what Ford could be doing there. They told him Ford was dead. The waiter took a fever, in which he lay for some time. When he recovered he said he had a message to deliver to some woman from Ford; but he was not to tell them what, or from whom. He walked out; he was followed; but somewhere about St. Paul's they lost him. He came back and said he had delivered it; the woman exclaimed, "Then we are all undone!" A doctor, who was not a credulous man, inquired into the truth of the story, and he said the evidence was irresistible. "My wife went to the Hummums (it is a place where people get themselves cupped); I believe she went with the intention to hear about this story of Ford. At first they were unwilling to tell her; but after

they had talked to her, she came away satisfied it was true. To be sure, the man had a fever, and this vision may have been the beginning of it. But if the message to the woman, and their behaviour upon it were true, as related, there was something supernatural. That rests upon his word, and there it remains." Oh, Doctor Johnson, Doctor Johnson, what, after all, did it matter what a delirious waiter saw, or did not see? Poor drunken Parson Ford, too, who himself so often saw double!

In the Bedford Coffee House, in the Piazza, there have been as many bottles cracked by clever men as in any tavern in London. Garrick, Quin, Foote, and Murphy were especial habitués at this convenient spot, and in 1754 Bonnell Thornton describes the house as every night crowded with men of parts. He says, "Jokes and bon-mots are echoed from box to box; every branch of literature is critically examined, and the merit of every production of the press or performance of the theatre weighed and determined." Conversation had not yet become a lost art. In 1765, Murphy, writing to Garrick, whose life he afterwards wrote, draws a fine sketch of the tavern bully and duellist of those days.

"Tiger Roach, who used to bully at the Bedford Coffee House, is set up by Wilkes's friends for Brentford, to burlesque Luttrell and his pretensions. I own I do not know a more ridiculous circumstance than to be a joint candidate with the Tiger. O'Brien used to take him off very pleasantly, and perhaps you may, from his representation, have some idea of this important wight. He used to sit with a half-starved look, a black patch upon his cheek, pale with the idea of murder, or with rank cowardice, a quivering lip, and a downcast eye. In that manner he used to sit at a table all alone, and his soliloquy, interrupted now and then with faint attempts to throw off a little saliva, was to the following effect: 'Hut! hut! a mercer's 'prentice with a bag-wig; d—n me, if I would not skiver a dozen of them like larks! Hut! hut! I don't understand such airs! How do you do, Pat? Hut! hut! Odd's blood—Larry, I'm glad to see you;—'prentices! a fine thing, indeed! Hut! hut! how do you, Dominick? What's here to do?' These were the meditations of this agreeable youth. From one of these reveries he started up one night, when I was there, called a Mr. Bagnall out of the room, and most heroically stabbed him in the dark,

the other having no weapon to defend himself with. In this career the Tiger persisted, till at length a Mr. Lennard brandished a whip over his head, and stood in a menacing attitude, commanding him to ask pardon directly. The Tiger shrank from the danger, and with a faint voice pronounced, 'Hut, hut! what signifies it between you and me? Well, well! I ask your pardon.' 'Speak louder, sir; I don't hear a word you say,' and, indeed, he was so very tall that it seemed as if the sound, sent feebly from below, could not ascend to such a height. This is the hero who is to figure at Brentford."

The Piazza in the old time was the scene of many rencontres, and in the days when swords were worn, blood was not unfrequently spilt upon its stones. Shenstone describes, in 1744, a gang of pickpockets armed with cutlasses, waiting here at dark and attacking persons coming out of the playhouse. That jolly bon-vivant, Quin, fought two duels here, one with a second-rate Welsh actor, named Williams, and another with that clever scoundrel, Theophilus Cibber. Williams, indignant with Quin for ridiculing him on the stage for calling Cato, Keeto, laid wait for him in the Piazza. Quin, contemptuous, yet unwilling to decline a fight, drew his sword and soon stretched Williams dead at his feet. Cibber also quarrelled with Quin, who had denounced him for neglecting a beautiful and injured wife. They fought in the Piazza, when Quin and Cibber slashed and cut each other across the arms and fingers till they were parted.

NOTHING CARES.

AY, nothing cares: the buds peep out
Through the glory of waving grasses;
The lime-tree flings its passionate breath
To the light wind as it passes.
The roses cluster, crimson and white,
In affluent glow and bloom;
The sunshine lends its careless light
To the cradle and the tomb.
The wild birds sing mid the wedding chimes,
Or the mourners' sobbing prayers;
The seasons keep their stated time,
Life passes; nothing cares.

Our joy cannot soften the keen grey skies,
Or the sting of the glittering frost;
Our cry cannot sadden the spring's sweet sighs,
On the merry breezes tossed;
Our woe does not cloud the summer's flush,
As it gladdens o'er land and sea;
Our triumph sinks down when the autumn hush,
Claims its grave tranquillity.
Oh, never a touch of sympathy,
Great Nature's magic wears.
We strive, and stumble, and moan, and die:
Life passes; nothing cares.

Oh, love them, while our days are bright,
 Beauty, and life, and flowers.
 Let them give our summer added light,
 Let them bless our few bright hours,
 And when the certain shadows creep,
 Over the path we go,
 Let us turn away from it all, and weep,
 And bear, as we may, our woe;
 Asking no comfort from outward things,
 That but jar and mock our prayers,
 For a bitter truth experience brings,
 We die; and nothing cares.

"GOOSE."

THE bird which saved the Capitol has ruined many a play. "Goose," "to be goosed," "to get the big-bird," signifies to be hissed, says the Slang Dictionary. This theatrical cant term is of ancient date. In the induction to Marston's comedy of *What You Will*, 1607, it is asked if the poet's resolve shall be "struck through with the blirt of a goose breath?" Shakespeare makes no mention of goose in this sense, but he refers now and then to hissing as the play-goers' method of indicating disapproval. "Mistress Page, remember you your cue," says Ford's wife in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*. "I warrant thee," replies Mistress Page, "if I do not act it, hiss me!" In the Roman theatres, it is well known that the spectators pronounced judgment upon the efforts of the gladiators and combatants of the arena by silently turning their thumbs up or down, decreeing death in the one case and life in the other. Hissing, however, even at this time, was the usual method of condemning the public speaker of distasteful opinions. In one of Cicero's letters there is record of the orator Hortensius, "who attained old age without once incurring the disgrace of being hissed." The prologues of Ben Jonson and Beaumont and Fletcher frequently deprecate the hissing of the audience.

But theatrical censure, not content with imitating the goose, condescended to borrow from another of the inferior animals—the cat. Addison devoted one of his papers in the *Spectator* to a Dissertation upon Catcalls. In order to make himself master of his subject, he professed to have purchased one of these instruments, though not without great difficulty, "being informed at two or three toy-shops that the players had lately bought them all up." He found that antiquaries were much divided in opinion as to the origin of the catcall. A fellow of the Royal Society had concluded, from the simplicity of its make

and the uniformity of its sound, that it was older than any of the inventions of Jubal. "He observes very well, that musical instruments took their first rise from the notes of birds and other melodious animals, 'and what,' says he, 'was more natural than for the first ages of mankind to imitate the voice of a cat, that lived under the same roof with them?' He added, that the cat had contributed more to harmony than any other animal; as we are not only beholden to her for this wind instrument, but for our string music in general." The essayist, however, is disposed to hold that the catcall is originally a piece of English music. "Its resemblance to the voice of some of our British songsters, as well as the use of it, which is peculiar to our nation, confirms me in this opinion." He mentions that the catcall has quite a contrary effect to the martial instruments then in use; and instead of stimulating courage and heroism, sinks the spirits, shakes the nerves, curdles the blood, and inspires despair and consternation at a surprising rate. "The catcall has struck a damp into generals, and frightened heroes off the stage. At the first sound of it I have seen a crowned head tremble, and a princess fall into fits." He concludes with mention of an ingenious artist who teaches to play on it by book, and to express by it the whole art of dramatic criticism. "He has his bass and his treble catcall: the former for tragedy, the latter for comedy; only in tragi-comedies they may both play together in concert. He has a particular squeak to denote the violation of each of the unities, and has different sounds to show whether he aims at the poet or the player," &c.

The conveyance of a catcall to the theatre evidences a predisposition to uproarious censure. Hissing may be, in the nature of impromptu criticism, suddenly provoked by something held to be offensive in the representation; but a play-goer could scarcely have armed himself with a catcall without a desire and an intention of performing upon his instrument in any case. Of old, audiences would seem to have delighted in disturbance upon very light grounds. Theatrical rioting was of common occurrence. The rioters were in some sort a disciplined body, and proceeded systematically. Their plan of action had been previously agreed upon. It was a rule that the ladies should be politely handed out of the theatre before the commencement of any violent acts of hostility; and this dis-

appearance of the ladies from among the audience was always viewed by the management as rather an alarming hint of what might be expected. Then wine was sent for into the pit, the candles were thrown down, and the gentlemen drew their swords. They prepared to climb over the partitions of the orchestra and to carry the stage by assault. Now and then they made havoc of the decorations of the house, and cut and slashed the curtains, hangings, and scenery. At Drury Lane, in 1740, when a riot took place in consequence of the non-appearance of Madame Chateaufort, a favourite French dancer, a noble marquis deliberately proposed that the theatre should be fired, and a pile of rubbish was forthwith heaped upon the stage in order to carry into effect this atrocious suggestion. At the Haymarket Theatre, in 1749, the audience enraged at the famous Bottle Conjuror hoax, were incited by the Culloden Duke of Cumberland to pull down the house! The royal prince stood up in his box waving his drawn sword, which some one, however, ventured to wrest from his grasp. The interior fittings of the theatre were completely destroyed; the furniture and hangings being carried into the street and made a bonfire of, the curtain surmounting the flaming heap like a gigantic flag. A riot at the Lincoln's Inn Fields, in 1721, led to George the First's order that in future a guard should attend the performances. This was the origin of the custom that long prevailed of stationing sentries on either side of the proscenium during representations at the patent theatres. Of late years the guards have been relegated to the outside of the buildings. On the occasion of state visits of royalty to the theatre, however—although these are now, perhaps, to be counted among things of the past—Beefeaters upon the stage form an impressive part of the ceremonial.

Theatrical rioting has greatly declined in violence, as well it might, since the O. P. saturnalia of disturbance, which lasted some sixty-six nights at Covent Garden Theatre in 1809. Swords were no longer worn, but the rioters made free use of their fists, called in professional pugilists as their allies, and, in addition to catcalls, armed themselves with bells, post-horns, whistles, and watchmen's rattles. The O. P. riots may be said to have abolished the catcall, but they established "goose." Captures of the rioters were occasionally made by Brandon, the courageous box-office keeper,

and they were charged at Bow-street police court with persistent hissing, with noisily crying "Silence!" and with "unnatural coughing." The charges were not proceeded with, but one of the accused, Mr. Clifford, a barrister, brought an action against Brandon for false imprisonment. In this case the Court of King's Bench decided that, although the audience in a public theatre have a right to express the feelings excited at the moment by the performance, and in this manner to applaud or hiss any piece which is represented, or any performer; yet if a number of persons, having come to the theatre with a predetermined purpose of interrupting the performance, for this end make a great noise so as to render the actors inaudible, though without offering personal violence or doing injury to the house, they are in law guilty of a riot. Serjeant Best, the counsel for the plaintiff, urged that, as play and players might be hissed, managers should be liable to their share; they should be controlled by public opinion; Garrick and others had yielded cheerfully to the jurisdiction of the pit without a thought of appealing to Westminster Hall. "Bells and rattles," added the serjeant, "may be new to the pit; but catcalls, which are equally stunning, are as old as the English drama." Apparently, however, the catcall, its claim to antiquity notwithstanding, was not favourably viewed by the court. In summing up, Chief Justice Mansfield observed: "I cannot tell on what grounds many people think they have a right, at a theatre, to make such a prodigious noise as to prevent others hearing what is going forward on the stage. Theatres are not absolute necessities of life, and any person may stay away who does not approve of the manner in which they are managed. If the prices of admission are unreasonable, the evil will cure itself. People will not go, and the proprietors will be ruined, unless they lower their demand. If the proprietors have acted contrary to the conditions of the patent, the patent itself may be set aside by a writ of *scire facias* in the Court of Chancery." To the great majority of play-goers it probably occurred that hissing was a simpler and more summary remedy of their grievances and relief to their feelings than any the Court of Chancery was likely to afford. In due time, however, came free trade in the drama and the abolition of the special privileges and monopolies too long enjoyed by the patent theatres.

After the failure of his luckless farce, Mr. H., Charles Lamb wrote to Wordsworth, "A hundred hisses (hang the word! I write it like *kisses*—how different!), a hundred hisses outweigh a thousand claps. The former come more directly from the heart." The reception of the little play had been of a disastrous kind, and Lamb, sitting in the front row of the pit, is said to have joined in condemning his own work, and to have hissed and hooted as loudly as any of his neighbours. "I had many fears; the subject was not substantial enough. John Bull must have solider fare than a letter. We are pretty stout about it; have had plenty of condoling friends; but, after all, we had rather it should have succeeded. You will see the prologue in most of the morning papers. It was received with such shouts as I never witnessed to a prologue. It was attempted to be encored. . . . The quantity of friends we had in the house—my brother and I being in public offices, &c.—was astonishing, but they yielded at last to a few hisses." Mr. H. could probably in no case have achieved any great success, but it may be that its failure was precipitated by the indiscreet cordiality of its author's "quantity of friends." They were too eager to express approbation, and distributed their applause injudiciously. The pace at which they started could not be sustained. As Monsieur Auguste, the famous chef des claqueurs at the Paris Opera House, explained to Doctor Veron, the manager, "*il ne fallait pas trop chauffer le premier acte; qu'on devait, au contraire, réserver son courage et ses forces pour enlever le dernier acte et le dénouement.*" He admitted that he should not hesitate to award three rounds of applause to a song in the last act, to which, if it had occurred earlier in the representation, he should have given one round only. Lamb's friends knew nothing of this sound theory of systematised applause. They expended their ammunition at the commencement of the struggle, and when they were, so to say, out of range. It was one of Monsieur Auguste's principles of action that public opinion should never be outraged or affronted; it might be led and encouraged, but there should be no attempt to drive it. "Above all things, respect the public," he said to his subordinates. Nothing so much stimulates the disapprobation of the unbiassed as extravagant applause. Reaction certainly ensues; men begin to hiss by way of self-assertion, and out of self-respect. They resent an attempt to coerce their

opinion, and to compel a favourable verdict in spite of themselves. The attempt to encore the prologue to Mr. H. was most unwise. It was a strong prologue, but the play was weak. The former might have been left to the good sense of the general public; it was the latter that especially demanded the watchful support of the author's friends. The infirm need crutches, not the robust. The playbills announced, "The new farce of Mr. H., performed for the first time last night, was received by an overflowing audience with universal applause, and will be repeated for the second time to-morrow." Such are playbills. Mr. H. never that morning saw. "'Tis withdrawn, and there's an end of it," wrote Lamb to Wordsworth.

Hissing is no doubt a dreadful sound—a word of fear unpleasant to the ear of both playwright and player. For there is no revoking, no arguing down, no remedying a hiss; it has simply to be endured. Playgoers have a giant's strength in this respect; but it must be said for them, that, of late years at any rate, they have rarely used it tyrannously, like a giant. Of all the dramatists, perhaps Fielding treated hissing with the greatest indifference. In 1743, his comedy of the *Wedding Day* was produced. Garrick had in vain implored him to suppress a scene which he urged would certainly endanger the success of the piece. "If the scene is not a good one, let them find it out," said Fielding. As had been foreseen an uproar ensued in the theatre. The actor hastened to the green-room, where the author was cheering his spirits with a bottle of champagne. Surveying Garrick's rueful countenance, Fielding inquired, "What's the matter? Are they hissing me now?" "Yes, the very passage I wanted you to retrench. I knew it wouldn't do. And they've so horribly frightened me I shall not be right again the whole night." "Oh," cried the author, "I did not give them credit for it. So they have found it out, have they?" Upon the failure of his farce of *Eurydice*, he produced an occasional piece entitled *Eurydice Hissed*, in which Mrs. Charke, the daughter of Colley Cibber, sustained the part of Pillage, a dramatic author. Pillage is about to produce a new play, and one of his friends volunteers to "clap every good thing till I bring the house down." "That won't do," Pillage sagaciously replies; "the town of its own accord will applaud what they like; you must stand by me when they dislike. I don't desire any of you to clap unless

when you hear a hiss. Let that be your cue for clapping." Later in the play three gentlemen enter, and in Shakespearian fashion discuss in blank verse the fate of Pillage's production:

Third Gentleman. Oh friends, all's lost! Eurydice is damned.

Second Gentleman. Ha! damned! A few short moments past I came

From the pit door and heard a loud applause.

Third Gentleman. 'Tis true at first the pit seemed greatly pleased,

And loud applauses through the benches rung;

But as the plot began to open more

(A shallow plot) the claps less frequent grew,

Till by degrees a gentle hiss arose;

This by a cateall from the gallery

Was quickly seconded: then followed claps;

And 'twixt long claps and hisses did succeed

A stern contention; victory being dubious.

So hangs the conscience, doubtful to determine

When honesty pleads here, and there a bribe.

But it was mighty pleasant to behold

When the damnation of the farce was sure,

How all those friends who had begun the claps

With greatest vigour showed who first should hiss

And show disapprobation.

Surely no dramatist ever jested more over his own discomfiture. In publishing Eurydice he described it as "a farce, as it was d-d at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane." This was a following of Ben Jonson's example, who, publishing his New Inn, makes mention of it as a comedy "never acted, but most negligently played by some the king's servants, and more squeamishly beheld and censured by others the king's subjects, 1629; and now, at last, set at liberty to the readers, his majesty's servants and subjects, to be judged of, 1631."

There is something pathetic in the way Southerne, the veteran dramatist, in 1726, bore the condemnation of his comedy of Money the Mistress, at the Lincoln's-Inn Fields Theatre. The audience hissed unmercifully. Rich, the manager, asked the old man, as he stood in the wings, "if he heard what they were doing?" "No, sir," said Southerne, calmly, "I'm very deaf." On the first representation of *She Stoops to Conquer*, a solitary hiss was heard during the fifth act at the improbability of Mrs. Hardcastle, in her own garden, supposing herself forty miles off on Crackskull Common. "What's that?" cried Goldsmith, not a little alarmed at the sound. "Psha! doctor," replied Colman, "don't be afraid of a squib when we have been sitting these two hours on a barrel of gunpowder." Goldsmith is said never to have forgiven Colman his ill-timed pleasantry. The hiss seems to have been really a solitary and exceptional one. It was ascribed

by one journal to Cumberland, by another to Hugh Kelly, and by a third, in a parody on Ossian, to Macpherson, who was known to be hostilely inclined towards Johnson and all his friends. The disapprobation excited by the capital scene of the bailiffs in Goldsmith's earlier comedy, *The Good-natured Man*, had been of a more general and alarming kind, however, and was only appeased by the omission of this portion of the work. Goldsmith suffered exquisite distress. Before his friends, at the club in Gerrard-street, he exerted him greatly to hide the fact of his discomfiture; chatted gaily and noisily, and even sang his favourite comic song with which he was wont to oblige the company only on special occasions. But alone with Johnson he fairly broke down, confessed the anguish of his heart, burst into tears, and swore he would never write more. The condemnation incurred by *The Rivals* on its first performance led to its being withdrawn for revision and amendment. In his preface to the published play Sheridan wrote: "I see no reason why an author should not regard a first night's audience as a candid and judicious friend attending, in behalf of the public, at his last rehearsal. If he can dispense with flattery, he is sure at least of sincerity, and even though the annotation be rude, he may rely upon the justness of the comment." This is calm and complacent enough, but he proceeds with some warmth: "As for the little puny critics who scatter their peevish strictures in private circles, and scribble at every author who has the eminence of being unconnected with them, as they are usually spleen-swollen from a vain idea of increasing their consequence, there will always be found a petulance and illiberality in their remarks, which should place them as far beneath the notice of a gentleman, as their original dulness had sunk them from the level of the most unsuccessful author." This reads like an extract from the *School for Scandal*.

In truth hissing is very hard to endure. Lamb treated the misfortunes of Mr. H. as lightly as he could, yet it is plain he took his failure much to heart. In his letter signed Semel-Damnatus, upon Hissing at the Theatres, he is alternately merry and sad over his defeat as a dramatist. "Is it not a pity," he asks, "that the sweet human voice which was given man to speak with, to sing with, to whisper tones of love in, to express compliance, to convey a favour, or to grant a suit—that voice, which

in a Siddons or a Braham rouses us, in a siren Catalani charms and captivates us—that the musical expressive human voice should be converted into a rival of the noises of silly geese and irrational venomous snakes? I never shall forget the sounds on my night!" He urges that the venial mistake of the poor author, "who thought to please in the act of filling his pockets, for the sum of his demerits amounts to no more than that," is too severely punished; and he adds, "the provocations to which a dramatic genius is exposed from the public are so much the more vexatious as they are removed from any possibility of retaliation, the hope of which sweetens most other injuries; for the public never writes itself." He concludes with an account, written in an Addisonian vein, of a club to which he had the honour to belong. "There are fourteen of us, who are all authors that have been once in our lives what is called damned. We meet on the anniversaries of our respective nights, and make ourselves merry at the expense of the public. . . . To keep up the memory of the cause in which we suffered, as the ancients sacrificed a goat, a supposed unhealthy animal, to Æsculapius, on our feast nights we cut up a goose, an animal typical of the popular voice, to the deities of Candour and Patient Hearing. A zealous member of the society once proposed that we should revive the obsolete luxury of viper-broth; but, the stomachs of some of the company rising at the proposition, we lost the benefit of that highly salutary and antidotal dish."

It is to be observed that when a play is hissed there is this consolation at the service of those concerned: they can shift the burden of reproach. The author is at liberty to say, "It was the fault of the actors. Read my play, you will see that it did not deserve the cruel treatment it experienced." And the actor can assert, "I was not to blame. I did but speak the words that were set down for me. My fate is hard—I have to bear the burden of another's sins." And in each case these are reasonably valid pleas. In the hour of triumph, however, it is certain that the author is apt to be forgotten, and that the lion's share of success is popularly awarded to the players. For the dramatist is a vague, impalpable, invisible personage; whereas the actor is a vital presence upon the scene; he can be beheld, noted, and listened to; it is difficult to disconnect him from the humours he exhibits, from the pathos he displays, from the speeches he utters. Much may be due to his own merit;

but still his debt to the dramatist is not to be wholly ignored. The author is applauded or hissed, as the case may be, by proxy. But altogether it is perhaps not surprising that the proxy should oftentimes forget his real position, and arrogate wholly to himself the applause due to his principal.

High and low, from Garrick to "the super," it is probably the actor's doom, for more or less reasons, at some time or another, to be hissed. He is, as members of parliament are fond of saying, "in the hands of the house," and may be ill-considered by it. Any one can hiss, and one goose makes many. Lamb relates how he once saw Elliston, sitting in state in the tarnished green-room of the Olympic Theatre, while before him was brought for judgment, on complaint of prompter, "one of those little tawdry things that flirt at the tails of choruses—the pertest little drab—a dirty fringe and appendage of the lamp's smoke—who, it seems, on some disapprobation expressed by a 'highly respectable' audience, had precipitately quitted her station on the boards and withdrawn her small talents in disgust. 'And how dare you,' said the manager, 'how dare you, madam, without a notice, withdraw yourself from your theatrical duties?' 'I was hissed, sir.' 'And you have the presumption to decide upon the taste of the town?' 'I don't know that, sir, but I will never stand to be hissed,' was the rejoinder of Young Confidence. Then, gathering up his features into one significant mass of wonder, pity, and expostulatory indignation—in a lesson never to have been lost upon a creature less forward than she who stood before him—his words were these: 'They have hissed ME!'"

It is understood that this argument failed in its effect, for, after all, a hiss is not to be in such wise excused or explained away; its application is far too direct and personal. "Ladies and gentlemen, it was not I that shot the arrow," said Braham to his audience, when some bungling occurred in a performance of William Tell, and the famous apple remained uninjured upon the head of the hero's son. If derision was moved by this bungling, still more did the singer's address and confession excite the mirth of the spectators. To another singer, failure, or the dread of failure, was fraught with more tragic consequence. For some sixteen years Adolphe Nourrit had been the chief tenor of the Paris Opera House. He had created the leading characters in Robert, Les Huguenots, La Juive, Gustave, and Masaniello. He resigned his position pre-

capitately upon the advent of Duprez. The younger singer afflicted the elder with a kind of panic. The news that Duprez was among his audience was sufficient to paralyse his powers, to extinguish his voice. He left France for Italy. His success was unquestionable, but he had lost confidence in himself; a deep dejection settled upon him, his apprehension of failure approached delirium. At last he persuaded himself that the applause he won from a Neapolitan audience was purely ironical, was but scoffing ill-disguised. At five in the morning, on the 8th of March, 1839, he flung himself from the window of an upper floor, and was picked up in the street quite dead. Poor Nourrit! he was a man of genius in his way; but for him there would have been no grand duet in the fourth act of *Les Huguenots*, no cavatina for Eleazar in *La Juive*; and to his inventiveness is to be ascribed the ballet of *La Sylphide*, which Taglioni made so famous.

It is odd to hear of an actor anxious for "goose," and disappointed at not obtaining it. Yet something like this happened once during the O. P. riots. Making sure that there would be a disturbance in the theatre, Mr. Murray, one of John Kemble's company, thought it needless to commit his part to memory; he was so certain that he should not be listened to. But the uproar suddenly ceased; there was a lull in the storm. The actor bowed, stammered, stared, and was what is called in the language of the theatre "dead stuck." However, his mind was soon at ease; to do him justice the audience soon hissed him to his heart's content, and perhaps even in excess of that measure. Subsequently he resolved, riot or no riot, to learn something of his part.

THE BRITISH TOURIST.

FROM MY WINDOW IN THE HIGHLANDS.

It is my time for the "*dolce far niente*"—if scaling the Highland Bens, tramping through glen and strath thirty miles a day, and bathing either in the sea or in the clear cold waters of a mountain streamlet, can be called doing nothing. I do not shoot, I do not fish, I do not stalk the deer; for I do not like to kill anything when I take my pleasure, or indeed at any other time, unless it be a wasp or a mosquito, and then only in self-defence. I am lying fallow, as it were, allowing my mind to take a' needful rest; but, even when fallow, the earth is not idle, nor can the mind of any one who has been accustomed to use it ever be said to be wholly at rest, unless it be in the

deep, happy sleep which comes seldom to any one, and which is untroubled by a dream. I am enjoying my leisure in the bonnie little town of Oban, embowered amid the mountains of Argyllshire.

Having nothing to do, and intending to do it well, I amuse myself by sitting at my window, looking over the lovely bay to the green hills of Kerrera and the dark mountains of Mull, watching and studying the varied lights and shadows of the ever-changing landscape. But it is also my fancy to study my fellow-creatures, especially if they come in the shape of tourists. Whether their object be to kill the grouse and call it sport; to climb the hill-sides in search of rare flowers and ferns; to scramble over high peaks and stony summits, hammer in hand, to chip off pieces of rock and think they are making progress in geology; to wade knee-deep in streams and rivers and fish for trout and salmon; to sit upon the shore and throw pebbles into the sea; or, if they be ladies, to lounge upon the beach and dilute their intellects by reading the girlish prattle of the last new novel by the great Mr. Slip-Slop—they are all equally interesting to me. While I am in the position of what the Americans call a loafer, it is my pleasure to observe the manners and customs of these emancipated people, and to note how happy they all seem to be, the one sex in being relieved from the trammels of their daily business in shop, in mill, in bank, or in counting-house, and the other from the monotonous round of their home existence, and the eternal thrumming of their wearisome pianofortes. In the male tourist there is a rollicking sense of freedom, which beams on his countenance and pervades his whole behaviour. He plays truant from his school, and the cold, hard eye of Master Business is no longer upon him. He gives his nature, mild, or genial, or savage, as it may happen to be, full scope and expansion. He feels that his spirit has been bottled up too long, and that civilisation has cramped him, swathed him, smothered him, stunted him, and benumbed him. He consequently resolves to throw off civilisation to what extent he can, and become a "noble savage," rampant and riotous in his newly acquired liberty. The same feeling animates the ladies, who revel in unthought extravagance of dress and manner.

As in other watering-places, one of the chief amusements of the day at Oban is to go down to the pier to await the arrival of the daily steamer, and a beautiful steamer

she is—the Chevalier, sister of the more beautiful Iona that plies from Glasgow to Ardrishaig. The Chevalier takes up her passengers at Crinan, the outlet of the canal of the same name which cuts through the isthmus of Knapdale, and saves the long voyage of eighty miles round the Mull of Cantyre. It is (to use an old phrase) as good as a play to watch the tourists as they arrive, and scamper off towards the principal hotels to secure lodgings, as if the demon of selfishness had taken possession of their feet and urged them onwards, to snatch the smallest possible advantage over their neighbours. One portly old paterfamilias, who looks as if his climbing days had been over a quarter of a century ago, has armed himself with an alpenstock, as if he expected to find the glaciers and crevasses of Mont Blanc on the slopes of Ben Cruachan. Materfamilias, more portly still, has not an alpenstock merely, but a whole collection of different sorts and sizes of alpenstocks, wrapped round with a strong leathern buckle; while her daughter—fresh, saucy, defiant, with a chignon as big as the bearskin of a Life Guardsman, and a thin disc intended for a hat aslant on the top of it—steps ashore with a package of walking-sticks, a butterfly net, and a geological hammer, as if she were, as no doubt she is, bent on very serious business in the Highlands, and determined, as is the fashion of the English, to amuse herself “moult tristement.”

I notice that the vagaries of costume in which tourists indulge are pretty equally divided between the women and the men. The women amuse themselves, and displease everybody of the other sex who looks at them, by making their heads as hideous as they can by the fashion in which they arrange their hair (and other people's mixed along with it), and by the head-gear which they stick on the top of it; while the men bestow their chief attention upon their legs, which they defiantly display either in kilts or in knickerbockers. No man with spindle shanks ought to be permitted to wear either of these articles of costume, under the penalty inflicted for drunkenness in the days before the New Licensing Act—a fine of five shillings; and if his legs be good and fairly presentable, he ought not to be allowed to encase them in red, or purple, or parti-coloured stockings, without incurring some degree of public reprobation for his abominably bad taste. If the ladies ever take to kilts or knickerbockers, something might be said in

favour of the daring innovation. But as for men—respectable citizens, perhaps, who certainly would not think of walking up and down Cheapside or Regent-street in such a guise—why, oh, why will they persist in making laughing-stocks of themselves as soon as they turn out for their annual holiday? Is it necessary for a man to play the fool because he visits a strange country? and to advertise himself to all the innkeepers and shopkeepers of every town which he enters as an ass and a simpleton, whom it is fair game to plunder?

But who comes here? A damsel with a sailor's hat high perched upon her enormous chignon, with a broad band around it on which is emblazoned the name of a yacht: let me call it the Snapdragon. She is followed by five other damsels, and one very old lady, all in the same costume, and all with sailor's hats, bearing in like manner the name of the Snapdragon on their head-gear. Clearly this is intended for an advertisement of the fact, that these ladies either keep a yacht, or are members of the family of, or perhaps merely friends and acquaintances of some one who is able to indulge in such a luxury. They seem to say in vulgar English, “We keeps a yacht, we does.” But who cares whether they keep a yacht or not? And of what interest is it to any one but themselves to know the name of their vessel? And if a woman, young or old, ever can be a snob, is it not a piece of very vulgar snobbery indeed to parade in this manner the fact of her wealth and importance?

But here comes something of another type; a veritable, a determined, and most unmistakable tourist. His grey knickerbockers are very baggy at the knees, his coat is brown, and his stockings are scarlet, and he wears a scarlet belt around his loins. He carries a knapsack on his back, and an alpenstock in his hand. At his back, dangling just above his hips, is slung a miniature liquor-barrel with glass ends, through which any one can see that it is about half full of whisky or brandy. Immediately above the barrel, but somewhat nearer to his hand, he carries an opera-glass. From one of his multitudinous pockets projects a telescope, and from his watch-chain dangles a small aneroid. His head is surmounted by a Glengarry bonnet, with an eagle's plume—though perhaps it is only a feather from the tail of a barn-door fowl. Beside him walks his wife, a little round woman, with blue spectacles, carrying in one hand an inflated air-cushion to soften

her seat should she repose upon a crag, and in the other an alpenstock, with a great ferrule, to dig, it is to be supposed, into the soft ice of the glaciers, which she certainly will not find either in the highways or the byways, the glens or the Bens of Argyllshire. She, too, has her dram-barrel slung at her back, as if she suspected that her husband would not drink "truly and fairly," and was determined to shelter herself on the right side of her doubt by carrying a supply of her own. As the main object of your genuine cockney tourist appears to be to be looked at, no one need be much surprised, however much he may be amused, by any oddities of costume or manner which any of the class may affect for the purpose. Take, for instance, Brown of Cornhill—whom I know but will not recognise, lest I should laugh in his face—who saunters along the esplanade, exhibiting his legs, which are almost guiltless of calves, and which would certainly look better if padded, or, better still, if concealed altogether, adorned the one with a mauve and the other with a green stocking. The ladies look and titter, and Brown walks on his way rejoicing, while I mentally ejaculate the well known lines of Burns, "Oh, would some power the giftie gie us," &c., which if Brown thought upon the subject would, very probably, appear to be as applicable to me as to himself. After him follows a very tall man, said to be a member of parliament, distinguished in the law, with a gun-case in his hand. He is bound for the moors, evidently, and, by the patches of leather on the knees of his knickerbockers, seems to notify to an admiring world that such small deer as grouse are not what he is in search of, and that a nobler creature, the mountain stag, is the object of his pursuit. Like the Laird of Cockpen, he wears a blue coat and a white waistcoat; but, unlike the laird, he sports purple stockings streaked with white, and, over all, an Ulster great coat, with a marvellous supply of pockets and whisky flasks. And not alone the mountains, but the streams are to be visited by this adventurous gentleman, if one may judge from his bundle of fishing-rods and tackle. Looking deeper into the crowd, I become aware of the presence of Americans, with huge unwieldy trunks, their names inscribed upon them in very large and conspicuous letters together with their address in New York, or, perhaps, in Maine, Vermont, or Ohio. The gentlemen are gaunt and sallow, while the ladies—very delicate and petite—look as if such very small feet as they possess would

be utterly unable to support the weight of their bodies, if they attempted any great exertion of locomotion. They are all fully accoutred for travel on the mountains; indeed, a much higher mountain than they are likely to discover in this or any other part of Caledonia. The Americans do not care for sport. They neither shoot nor fish, but are content to roam from place to place, and to visit all the spots that are celebrated in the abundant romance and still more abundant poetry of Scotland. They are all well up in their Burns and their Scott, and draw additional enjoyment from the scenery by their ability to call to memory all the legendary and historical lore connected with it. This is the true joy of travelling, and the best recompense for the toils which it entails.

Five days a week, during the summer season, a steamer starts at eight in the morning, weather permitting, for an excursion to Staffa and Iona, making the whole circuit of the noble island of Mull, to which these smaller islets are but adjuncts and appendages. A party of Cook's tourists are expected to-morrow, and I make up my mind to go along with them, purely out of the interest I take in the genus. For I love the tourist in spite of his eccentricities, and am rejoiced to see him happy, provided he be not a very great snob indeed. The wondrous cave of Staffa is familiar ground to me, and I make this particular visit not for the sake of the cave, but for that of studying the tourists. And a joyous company they are, as they marshal themselves on the pier of Oban, under the guidance of a tall man with a white beard and a red fez, who escorts them, to the number of forty or thereabouts, on board of the Pioneer, the steamer appointed for the trip. They are by no means loud, either in their costume or their behaviour, and have dressed themselves much the same as they would have dressed themselves in the pursuit of their ordinary business in the streets of London, Manchester, or Glasgow. There is one man among them who carries a cornet-à-piston, but who does not favour the company with any specimen of his skill upon the instrument, reserving the display, as we learn hereafter, for the interior of the cave, when he intends to try its effect in awakening the echoes. And he does so with a vengeance, nearly spoiling all the pleasure of a splendid trip and a glorious day by his insane love of making an ass of himself. But, luckily, the man in the fez comes to the rescue, and, leading off with the Doxology, is speedily

joined by the whole company, who chant the glorious hymn in excellent style, and with the best possible effect. A most picturesque group they form as they line the dangerous path that leads to the end of the cave; the scarlet and azure cloaks and shawls of the ladies lighting up the gloomy grandeur of the abyss with rays of light and colour. Not even the fool with the cornet-à-piston can spoil the cave of Staffa.

THE YELLOW FLAG.

By EDMUND YATES,

AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "NOBODY'S FORTUNE," &c. &c.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER XII. ROSE COTTAGE TO LET.

It was probably not without a certain amount of consideration and circumspection that John Calverley had fixed upon Hendon as the place in which to establish his second home, to which to take the pretty, trusting girl who believed herself to be his wife. It was a locality in which she could live retired, and in which there was very little chance of his being recognised. It offered no advantages to gentlemen engaged in the City—it was not accessible by either boat, 'bus, or rail; the pony carriages of the inhabitants were for the most part confined to a radius of four miles in their journeys, and Davis's coach and the carrier's waggon were the sole means of communication with the metropolis.

Also, in his quiet, undemonstrative way, Mr. Calverley had taken occasion to make himself acquainted with the names, social position, and antecedents of all the inhabitants, and to ascertain the chances of their ever having seen or heard of him, which he found on inquiry were very remote. They were for the most part Hendon born and bred, and the few settlers amongst them were retired tradesmen, who had some connexion with the place, and who were not likely, from the nature of the business they had pursued while engaged in commerce, to have become acquainted with the person, or even to have heard the name of the head of the firm in Mincing-lane. About the doctor and the clergyman, as being the persons with whom he would most likely be brought into contact, he was specially curious. But his anxiety was appeased on learning that Mr. Broadbent was of a Devonshire family, and had practised in the neighbourhood of Tavistock previous to his purchase of old Doctor Fleeme's practice; while the

vicar, Mr. Tomlinson, after leaving Oxford, had gone to a curacy near Durham, whence he had been transferred to Hendon.

So, when he had decided upon the house, and Alice had taken possession of it, John Calverley congratulated himself on having settled her down in a place where not merely he was unknown, but where the spirit of inquisitiveness was unknown also. He heard of no gossiping, no inquiries as to who they were, or where they had come from. Comments, indeed, upon the disparity of years between the married couple reached his ears; but that he was prepared for, and did not mind, so long as Alice was loving and true to him. What cared he how often the world called him old, and wondered at her choice?

It must be confessed that concerning the amount of gossip talked about him and his household, John Calverley was very much deceived. The people of Hendon were not different from the people of any other place, and though they lived remote from the world, they were just as fond of talking about the affairs of their neighbours as fashionable women round the tea-table in their boudoirs, or fashionable men in the smoking-room of their clubs. They discussed Mrs. A.'s tantrums and Mrs. B.'s stinginess, the doctor's wife's jealousy, and the parson's wife's airs; all each others' short-comings were regularly gone through, and it was not likely that the household at Rose Cottage would be suffered to escape. On the contrary, it was a standing topic, and a theme for infinite discussion. Not that there was the smallest doubt amongst the neighbours as to the propriety of Alice's conduct, or the least question about her being the old gentleman's wife, but the mere fact of Mr. Claxton's being an old gentleman, and having such a young and pretty wife, excited a vast amount of talk; and when it was found that Mr. Claxton's business caused him to be constantly absent from home, there was no end to the speculation as to what that absence might not give rise. There seemed to be some sort of notion among the inhabitants that Alice would some day be carried bodily away, and many an innocent artist with his sketch-book in his breast-pocket, looking about him in search of a subject, has been put down by Miss M'Craw and her friends as a dangerous character, full of desperate designs upon Mr. Claxton's domestic happiness.

Miss M'Craw was a lady who took great interest in her neighbours' affairs, having but few of her own to attend to, and being

naturally of an excitable and inquiring disposition, she had made many advances towards Alice, which had not been very warmly reciprocated, and the consequence was that Miss M'Craw devoted a large portion of her time to espionage over the Rose Cottage establishment, and to commenting upon what she gleaned in a very vicious spirit. Early in the year in which the village was startled by the news of Mr. Claxton's death, Miss M'Craw was entertaining two or three of her special friends at tea in her little parlour, from the window of which she could command a distant view of the Rose Cottage garden gate, when the conversation, which had been somewhat flagging, happened to turn upon Alice, and thenceforth was carried on briskly.

"Now, my dear," said Miss M'Craw, in pursuance of an observation she had previously made, "we shall see whether he comes back again to-day. This is Wednesday, is it not? Well, he has been here for the last three Wednesdays, always just about the same time, between six and seven o'clock, and always doing the same thing."

"Who is he? and what is it all about, Martha?" asked Mrs. Gannup, who had only just arrived, and who had been going through the ceremony known as "taking off her things" in the little back parlour, while the previous conversation had been carried on.

"Oh, you were not here, Mrs. Gannup, and didn't hear what I said," said Miss M'Craw. "I was mentioning to these ladies that for the last three Wednesdays there has come a strange gentleman to our village, quite a gentleman too, riding on horseback, and with a groom behind him, well-dressed, and really," added Miss M'Craw, with a simper, "quite good-looking!"

She was the youngest of the party, being not more than forty-three years old, and in virtue of her youth was occasionally given to giggling and blushing in an innocent and playful manner.

"Never mind his good looks, Martha," said one of the ladies, in an admonitory tone, "tell Mrs. Gannup what you saw him do."

"Always the same," said Miss M'Craw. "He always leaves the groom at some distance behind him, and rides up by the side of the Claxtons' hedge, and sits on his horse staring over into their garden. If you wind up that old music-stool to the top of its screw," continued the innocent damsel, "and put it into that corner of the window,

and move the bird-cage, by climbing on to it you can see a bit of the Claxtons' lawn; and each time that I have seen this gentleman coming up the hill I have put the stool like that and looked out. Twice Mrs. Claxton was on the lawn, but directly she saw the man staring at her she ran into the house.

"Who," said Mrs. Gannup, "who is she that she should not be looked at as well as anybody else? I hate such mock modesty!"

"And what I was saying before you came in, dear," cried Miss M'Craw, who fully agreed with the sentiment just enunciated, "was, that this being Wednesday, perhaps he will come again to-day. I fixed our little meeting for to-night, in order that you might all be here to see him in case he should come. It is strange, to say the least of it, that a young man should come for three weeks running and stare in at a garden belonging to people whom he does not know, at least, whom I suppose he does not know, for he has never made an attempt to go to the front gate to be let in."

"There is something about these Claxtons——" said Mrs. Gannup.

And the worthy lady was not permitted to finish her sentence, for Miss M'Craw, springing up from her chair, cried, "There he is again, I declare, and punctual to the time I told you! Now bring the music-stool, quick!"

Her visitors crowded round the window, and saw a tall man with a long fair beard ride up to the hedge of the Claxtons' garden, as had been described by Miss M'Craw, rein in his horse, and stand up in his stirrups to look over the hedge.

So far the programme had been carried out exactly, to the intense delight of the on-lookers.

"Tell us," cried Mrs. Gannup to Miss M'Craw, who was mounted on a music-stool, "tell us, is she in the garden?"

"She? No," cried Miss M'Craw, from her coigne of vantage, "she is not, but he is. Mr. Claxton is walking up and down the lawn with his hands behind his back, and directly the man on horseback saw him he ducked down. See, he is off already!" And as she spoke the rider turned his horse's head, and, followed by his groom, cantered slowly away.

When he had gone for about a mile he reduced his horse's pace to a walk, and sitting back in his saddle, indulged in a low, noiseless, chuckling laugh.

"It was John Calverley, no doubt about that," he said to himself. "I thought it

was he a fortnight ago, but this time I am sure of it. Fancy that sedate old fellow, so highly thought of in the City, one of the pillars of British commerce, as they call him, spending his spare time in that pretty box with that lovely creature. From the glance I had of her at the window just now she seems as bewitching as ever. What a life for her, to be relegated to the society of an old fogey like that—old enough to be her father at the very least, and knowing nothing except about subjects in which she can scarcely be expected to take much interest. Not much even of that society, I should say, for old Calverley still continues to live with his wife in Walpole-street, and can only come out here occasionally, of course. What a dull time she must have of it, this pretty bird; how she must long for some companionship; for instance, that of a man more of her own age, who has travelled, and who knows the world, and can amuse her, and treat her as she ought to be treated."

Thus communing with himself, the good-looking, light-bearded gentleman rode on towards London, crossing the top of Hampstead Heath, and making his way by a narrow path, little frequented, but apparently well known to him, into the Finchley-road. There, close by the Swiss Cottage, he was joined by another equestrian, a gentleman equally well mounted and almost equally good-looking. This gentleman stared very much as he saw the first-named rider pass by the end of the side-road up which he was passing, and sticking spurs into his horse quickly came up with him.

"My dear Wetter," he cried, after they had exchanged salutations, "what an extraordinary fellow you are. You have still got the chestnut thoroughbred, I see; do you continue to like him?"

"I still have the chestnut thoroughbred, and I continue to like him," said Mr. Wetter, with a smile, "though why I am an extraordinary fellow for that I am at a loss to perceive."

"Not for that, of course," said his friend, "that was merely said *par parenthèse*. You are an extraordinary fellow because one never sees you in the Park, or in any place of that sort, and because one finds you riding alone here, evidently on your way back from some outlandish place in the north-west, after grinding away in the City, and wearying your brain as you must do with your enormous business; one would think you would like a little relaxation."

"It is precisely because I do grind away all the day in the City, I do weary my brain,

I do want a little relaxation, that you do not see me in the Park, where I should have to ride up and down that ghastly Row, and talk nonsense to the fribbles and the fools I meet there. It is precisely in search of the relaxation you speak that I ride out to the north-west or the south-east, it little matters to me where, so long as I can find fresh air and green trees, and the absence of my fellow-creatures."

"You are polite, by Jove," said his friend, with a laugh, "considering that I have just joined you."

"Oh, I don't mean you, Lingard," said Mr. Wetter. "My ride is over for the day. When I reach the turnpike yonder I look upon myself as within the confines of civilisation, and behave myself accordingly."

"You certainly are a very extraordinary fellow," said Mr. Lingard, who was one of those gushing creatures whom nothing could silence. "They were talking of you only yesterday at the Darnley Club."

"Indeed," said Wetter, without betraying the slightest interest in his manner, "and what were they pleased to say of me?"

"They were saying what a wonderful fellow you were, considering that whereas three years ago you had scarcely been heard of in London, you had made such a fortune and held such a leading position."

"Yes," said Mr. Wetter, with a pleasant smile, "they said that did they?"

"What Mr. Sleiner wondered was, that you did not get yourself made a baronet, like those other fellows."

"Ah, that was Sleiner," said Mr. Wetter, still with his smile.

"And Mopkinson said you would not care about that. He believed you intended to marry a woman of high family."

"Ah, that was Mopkinson," said Mr. Wetter, still smiling.

"Podlinbury said marriage was not in your way at all, and then they all laughed."

"Did Podlinbury say that?" said Mr. Wetter, grinning from ear to ear. "Now I really cannot conceive what should have made them all laugh."

"I cannot imagine myself," said Mr. Lingard, "and I told them so, and then they all roared worse than ever."

"Let me make amends for your having been laughed at on my account, my dear Lingard, by asking you to dinner. Come and dine with me at the club to-night. We shall have time to wash our hands and to get to table by half-past eight?"

"No, not to-night, thanks," said Mr. Lingard, "I am engaged, and I must push

on, by the way, for I dine at eight. Shall we meet on Friday?"

"Friday? Where?"

"At the house of one of your City magnates. You know him, I suppose—Mr. Calverley?"

"Mr. Calverley! Is there a dinner at his house in Great Walpole-street on Friday?"

"Oh yes," said Mr. Lingard, "a grand spread, I should imagine. A case of fortnight's invitation. Sorry you are not going. Thought I should be sure to meet you there. Ta! ta!" And the young man kissed his hand in adieu, and cantered away.

"That's a delightful young creature," said Mr. Wetter to himself, as he watched his friend's departing figure. "If there were only a few more like him in the City it would not take me long to complete that fortune which I am piling together. With what frankness and innocence he repeats all that is said about one by one's friends, and how refreshingly he confides to one everything concerning himself, even to his dinner engagements. By the way, that reminds me of that dinner-party at Calverley's, on Friday. At that dinner-party Calverley will necessarily be present. Friday would not be a bad day, therefore, for me to ride up again to Hendon, make some excuse for calling at the nest, and see if I can manage to get a sight of the bird. I will make a mem. to that effect when I go in."

The world was right in declaring Mr. Wetter to be a very wealthy man. He was the second partner in, and English representative of, the great Vienna banking-house of Wetter and Stutterheim, with branches in Paris, London, Frankfort, and New York. He came to London quite unknown, save to a few of his countrymen, but he was speedily spoken of as a man of immense capacity, and as a financier of the first rank. Perfectly steady-going people were Wetter and Stutterheim, doing a straightforward banking and agency business, with its quintupled operations, based upon the principles laid down by the old house of Kribbs et Cie. to whom they had succeeded. Wetter and Stutterheim smiled with scorn at the wonderful schemes which were daily brought forward upon the Stock Exchange, and at the status and supposed success of the persons by whom they were "promoted" and "financiered." They knew well enough how those matters were worked, and knew too what was generally the fate of those involved in them. Wetter and Stutterheim were quite content with the state of their balance on the thirty-first of every December, and content

with the status which they occupied in the eyes of the chief merchant princes of the various cities where their banking business was carried on.

Mr. Stutterheim managed the parent house in Vienna—the parent house, however, did not do a fourth of the business transacted by its London offspring—and only came to London once or twice a year. He was an elderly man, steady and responsible, but did not combine dash and energy with his more solid business qualifications, as did Mr. Henry Wetter, the head of the London house.

Mr. Wetter lived in pleasant rooms in South Audley-street; that is to say, he slept in them, and drank a hurried cup of coffee there in the morning when he did not breakfast at his club, but in general he followed the continental fashion, and took his first meal at about twelve o'clock in his private room at the bank after he had gone through and given his instructions upon the morning's letters. He returned to his lodging to dress for dinner; he dressed always punctiliously, whether he dined in society or by himself at the club, and was seldom out of his bed after midnight. A man whom no one could accuse of any positive excess, who lived strictly within his means, and who was never seen in any disreputable company; yet a man at the mention of whose name in certain society there went round winks and shoulder shrugs, and men hinted "that they could, and if they would," &c. Heinrich Wetter did not pay much attention to these hints, or rather to the men from whom they came. They were not the style of men whose good or bad words were likely to have the smallest influence on his career; his position was far too secure to be affected by anything they might say.

By anything any one might say, for the matter of that. He was full of that thought as he rode home after leaving Mr. Lingard. He had played his cards well in his wildest dreams, but he had never hoped to climb to the height at which he had actually arrived. Wealth? He did not spend a fifth part of his income. His old mother had her villa at Kreuznech, where she lived with his sister Lisbett, while Ernestine was married to Domhardt, who, thanks to him and his lent capital, was doing so well as a wine-grower at Hochheim. Fritz seemed to have settled down at last, and to be establishing for himself a business as Domhardt's agent in Melbourne. There was no one else of his own blood to support. There were others who had claims on him, but those

claims were allowed and provided for, and there was still more money than he knew with what to do. Position? Not much doubt about that! Men of the highest rank in the City allowed his status to be equal to their own; and as to his own house, the other partners had practically acknowledged that he was its backbone and their superior. For instance, when there was that question, a month ago, about the manner in which their New York agency was conducted, to whom did they refer but to him? If Rufus P. Clamborough had turned out a rogue, he would have had to go out, he thought, to settle the business there! Yes! to have the money and to have the position were both pleasant things! To gain them he sacrificed nearly all his life, and certainly he needed some little recreation. What a wonderful pretty girl that was at Rose Cottage, and how extraordinary that he should have discovered old John Calverley there! How lucky, too, that he should have met Lingard! The great dinner-party in Great Walpole-street was to be on Friday. On Friday, then, he would ride out by Hendon once again.

But Mr. Wetter did not ride out to Hendon on Friday, as he intended. On that Friday night he slept at the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool, going off in the tender at eight-thirty the next morning to the Cunard steamer China, lying in the Mersey, and not returning to England for nearly six months. On the evening of his meeting Mr. Lingard, on his arrival at South Audley-street, he found a telegram which had been forwarded to him from the City, informing him that Rufus P. Clamborough had by no means come out as rightly as was anticipated, and that it was imperative that some one should go out at once and look after the New York agency. Mr. Wetter was, above all things, a man of business, and he knew that that some one was himself, so he packed his portmanteau and went off. And finding an immense deal of business to be done, and life in New York city anything but disagreeable, he remained there until he had placed the affairs of Stutterheim and Wetter on a satisfactory footing, and then, and not till then, he took ship and came home.

Three weeks after Mr. Wetter's return to England, Miss M'Craw saw him once

again in the Hendon lane. It was spring time when she had last seen him, but now it was deep autumn, and the dead leaves were whirling through the air, and being gathered into heaps by the old men employed as scavengers by the parish. Miss M'Craw was alone in her little parlour, and had no friends to share her watch. Nevertheless, she did not allow her attention to be diverted from Mr. Wetter for an instant. She saw him ride up, followed by his groom, but instead of gazing over the hedge he rode straight to the front gate, over which appeared a painted board announcing the house as to let, and referring possible inquirers to the village agent and to the auctioneers in London.

Miss M'Craw saw Mr. Wetter yield up his horse to his groom, dismount, ring the bell, and pass out of her sight up the garden. When he reached the door it was already opened by the servant, who was standing there, to whom he intimated his desire to see the house. The girl asked him into the dining-room, and withdrew. Five minutes afterwards the door opened, and Pauline entered the room. The sun had set about five minutes previously, and there was but little daylight left, so little that Mr. Wetter, glancing at the new comer, thought he must have been deceived, and made a step forward, staring hard at her.

There was something in the movement which put Pauline on her mettle instantly.

"May I ask your business?" said she, in a hard, dry tone.

"The voice, the accent—no doubt about it now!" said Mr. Wetter to himself. Then he said aloud, "I see this house is to let: I ask to be permitted to look over it."

"The house cannot be seen without a card from the agent in the village, Mr. Bowles," said Pauline, in her former tone. "And I may as well remark that Mr. Bowles will not give a card to every one. He will expect a reference."

"I shall be very happy to give him one," said Mr. Wetter, with a sardonic smile. "My name is Henrich Wetter, formerly clerk to Monsieur Krebs, the banker, of Marseilles; and I shall be happy to refer him to an old acquaintance of mine, Madame Pauline Lunelle, dame du comptoir at the Restaurant du Midi in that city!"

END OF BOOK THE SECOND.

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